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SUBJECT: PRD INTERNAL ELECTIONS: WINNER DECLARED -- BUT IT  
AIN'T OVER YET

1. (SBU) Summary. Two months after its internal elections, Mexico's Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) is still struggling to identify who won. On April 30, the Party's National Guarantees and Oversight Commission declared Alejandro Encinas, the leader of the Party's United Left Faction (ULF), the winner. Ten days later, though, PRD's Technical Electoral Committee reversed the decision and declared Jesus Ortega, the leader of the Party's New Left (NLF) faction, the winner. Not surprisingly, Encinas is challenging this decision. Confidence on both sides in any declared results is practically non-existent. While the party should likely survive this internecine dispute, it has damaged party morale and undermined its image nationwide. Best prospects for a resolution likely lie in some kind of power sharing arrangement. End Summary.

#### Taking Turns as President-Elect

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2. (SBU) The two main candidates to the PRD's presidency, Alejandro Encinas and Jesus Ortega, respectively representing the party's radical and moderate wings, continue to dispute the results of elections held almost two months ago. On April 30, Encinas was declared the victor by the Party's National Guarantees and Oversight Commission based on a count of only 84 percent of the ballots. When Ortega challenged this outcome before Mexico's national electoral tribunal, that body ordered the PRD to count 100% of the votes. After a full count, on May 10, the PRD's Technical Electoral Committee reversed its earlier decision and declared Jesus Ortega the winner by 16,214-votes over Encinas. On May 11, the PRD's newly installed National Executive Committee (CEN) confirmed this result.

#### Encinas' Turn to Challenge the Results

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3.(SBU) Encinas wasted no time in calling foul comparing the process to the 2006 hotly contested 2006 presidential election, which many in the PRD consider to have been rigged. Encinas' campaign secretaries Gerardo Norona and Juan Manuel Avila also cited irregularities in key Ortega states and challenged the stewardship of the process by interim party president Guadalupe Acosta. Encinas' campaign is appealing the outcome back to PRD's Oversight Committee, as prescribed by party statutes.

4.(SBU) PRD insider Mary Carmen Soria believes Encinas is

contesting the result internally because he lacks iron-clad proof that will stand up in the federal electoral tribunal -- and because the oversight committee is composed of Encinas supporters who might tip the scales back in his favor yet again. Distrust of the national tribunal is widespread among most PRD members, who bitterly resent that body for validating the results of the 2006 vote. Encinas-insider Raul de la Paz maintained that former presidential candidate and Encinas, main backer Lopez Obrador's quick endorsement of an Oversight Commission ruling is designed to win over a broad range of PRD members.

Comment  
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5.(SBU) After two months of mutual recriminations and competing charges of corruption, it is unlikely either side will accept results suggesting the other side has won. While the belabored process has damaged party morale and its national standing, rumors of an impending split within party ranks still appear premature. Logistically, AMLO would be hard-pressed to form a new party and win a significant numbers of seats in the 2009 mid-term elections.

6.(SBU) While Ortega and Encinas show little sign of relenting at the present moment, some form of negotiated power-sharing arrangement between the two sides appears to offer the best prospect for a way out of this situation. The next PRD Congress, for example, in June may establish new rules for the selection of a permanent President and General Secretary. According to party insiders, the new PRD Congress

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may even consider changing the party's structure, creating an internal "frente" or block of leaders representing party factions. Each representative would carry voting weight according to the faction-size he/she represented. The devil will be in the details, however. Encinas-ally Garcia Ochoa indicated his faction might try to incorporate other leftist political parties, re-fashioning the party to give more weight to radical elements. Both Garcia Ochoa and Iran Moreno (an Ortega ally), however, said that despite differences over what the Frente would look like, Moreno said the Frente idea was gaining traction within the party.

7.(SBU) In the meantime, the barbs continue to fly exposing the party's vulnerabilities and costing the party credibility with the broader Mexican politic.

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